

"What a Colored Man Should Do To Vote" Pamphlet from Virginia, 1900

What a Colored Man Should Do To Vote

To the Colored Men of Voting Age in the Southern States

As citizens of the United States you cannot value too highly your right to vote, which is an expression of your choice of the officers who shall be placed in control of your nearest and dearest interests.

You should vote at every election. In National and congressional elections vote for the best interests of the country, in local elections vote for the best interests of the community in which you live.

NEVER SELL YOUR VOTE.

The Things that Qualify a Colored Man to Vote in the Southern States

IN order that you may know what will be demanded of you to vote under the Constitutions and laws of the several Southern States, we give below the substantial requirements of each, to wit:—

IN Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia and Tennessee

YOU MUST PAY YOUR POLL TAX.

YOU MUST REGISTER AND HOLD YOUR CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION.

If you can read and write you can register.

IN Alabama, Louisiana and South Carolina

If you cannot read and write you can register if you own \$300 worth of property.

IN Arkansas and Georgia

YOU MUST PAY YOUR POLL TAX.

IN Florida, Kentucky, Texas and West Virginia

You must reside in the State.

A man convicted of almost any crime may be barred from voting.

Alabama

Must reside in the State two years, one year in the County and three months in the election precinct.

Poll taxes for 1901 and each year since then must be paid before the first of February prior to the election.

Persons over forty-five years of age are exempt from poll tax.

Must be registered and hold a certificate of registration.

In order to register, must be able to read and write any Article of the Constitution of the United States, and must be regularly engaged in some work, employment, business, trade or calling, the greater part of the year before election, unless physically unable to work.

A person who cannot read and write, must own, or his wife must own forty acres of land upon which he must live, or must own real and personal property assessed at three hundred dollars, or his wife must own the same, upon which the taxes for the year before election must be paid.

Any person convicted of felony, adultery, larceny, wife-beating, miscegenation, vagrancy, selling or offering to sell his vote, is forever barred from voting.

Arkansas

Must reside one year in the State, six months in the County, and one month in the election precinct.

Must exhibit a poll tax receipt or other evidence that the poll tax has been paid at the regular time for collecting such tax.

Florida

Must reside one year in the State and six months in the County.

Georgia

Must reside one year in the State and six months in the County. Must have paid all taxes prior to election.

The poll tax required shall not exceed one dollar annually.

Kentucky

Must reside one year in the State, six months in the County, and sixty days in the precinct.

Must be registered in cities and towns of five thousand inhabitants.

Louisiana

Must reside two years in the State, one year in the parish and six months in the election precinct.

Must be registered and in order to do so, must be able to read and write, and shall demonstrate such ability to the registrars.

If unable to read and write, must own property assessed at three hundred dollars, on which, if personal, all taxes must have been paid.

Persons under sixty years of age must also pay a poll tax of one dollar annually, on or before the 31st day of December, for two years next before the time of voting, and shall exhibit such poll tax receipt for two years to the election officer at the polls.

Mississippi

Must reside in the State two years and one year in the election district or incorporated town or city.

Must have paid all taxes on or before the first day of February of the year of the election, and shall produce his tax receipts to the election officers.

Persons under sixty years of age must pay an annual poll tax of two dollars to the State, which may be increased one dollar by the County.

Must be registered, and in order to do so must be able to read any section of the Constitution of the State, or shall be able to understand the same when read, or give a reasonable interpretation thereof.

By a decision of the Supreme Court, a person otherwise qualified has a right to be registered whether his taxes are paid or not.

Any person convicted of felony, adultery, larceny, wife-beating or miscegenation is forever barred from voting.

North Carolina

Must reside in the State two years, in the County six months, and four months in the precinct or ward.

Must be registered and in order to do so, must be able to read and write any section of the Constitution, and shall have paid on or before the first day of May, an annual poll tax of two dollars for the previous year.

Persons over fifty years of age are exempt from poll tax.

South Carolina

Must reside in the State two years, in the County one year, and four months in the polling precinct.

Must be registered, and in order to do so must be able to read and write any section of the Constitution submitted by the registrars, and if unable to read and write, must prove to the satisfaction of the registrars the ownership of three hundred dollars worth of property in the State, upon which all taxes for the previous year must have been paid.

All poll tax must be paid six months before election, and tax receipts showing the payment of all taxes including the poll tax shall be shown to the election officer at the polls.

Any person convicted of felony, adultery, larceny, wife-beating or miscegenation is forever barred from voting.

Tennessee

Must reside in the State one year, in the County six months. A poll tax receipt for the previous year shall be shown to the judges of election.

Persons over fifty years of age are exempt from poll tax.

Must be able to mark the ticket at election without assistance.

In precincts or civil districts with a population of fifty thousand, and in towns and cities of two thousand five hundred, must be registered.

Any person convicted of felony, bribery or larceny is forever barred from voting.

Texas

Must reside in the State one year, and in the County six months.

An annual poll tax of one dollar and fifty cents is required of persons under sixty years of age, but this is not a prerequisite to the exercise of the right to vote.

Virginia

Must reside in the State two years, in the County one year, and in the precinct thirty days.

Must pay all State poll taxes, for three preceding years, at least six months before election.

Must be registered, and in order to do so, shall be able to make application for the same in writing, and must answer on oath any and all questions put by the registrars affecting qualifications.

Any person convicted of felony, bribery, petit larceny or obtaining money or property under false pretenses is forever barred from voting.

West Virginia

Must reside in the State one year, and in the County sixty days. The right to vote shall never be denied because not registered.

General Advice

You are urged to pay all of your taxes at the required time, and especially your poll tax which is by the Constitution of every Southern State made a special fund for the support of the free public schools.

You are also admonished against the commission of any crime, great or small, as the conviction of almost any crime will deprive you of your right to vote, and put upon you lasting shame and disgrace.

It is especially urged that as voters you should seek to be on friendly terms with your white neighbors in the communities in which you live, so that you may consult with them about your common interests; and that you should ally yourselves with the best people in your community for the general good. It is of the utmost importance to the race, and it cannot be urged too strongly upon your attention that nothing should influence your vote except a desire to serve the best interests of the country, and of your State.

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